



Building Blocks for Wisconsin's Future

The Foundation for an Early Childhood System

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Letter from Co-Chairs

Dear Governor Walker:

We are pleased to deliver the second annual report from the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), *Building Blocks for Wisconsin's Future: The Foundation for an Early Childhood System*, outlining the work of the ECAC in 2011. Building on efforts detailed in its initial report delivered in December 2010, the ECAC provided oversight and guidance to Wisconsin's early childhood system-building activities throughout this busy and exciting year.

Highlights of 2011 include the following activities:

- Articulation of an early childhood reform agenda used in Wisconsin's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant application. The proposal was ranked eleventh out of 35 applications, putting Wisconsin in a strong position for potential future grant competitions.
- Continued progress toward developing a concrete plan for establishing an early childhood longitudinal data system, including development of a project charter signed by three state department administrators.
- Issuance of a Professional Development Policy Scan to guide continuing efforts to develop a cross-sector early childhood and family support professional development system.
- Development of a proposal to establish a public-private funding board that would help to support key community and statewide early childhood initiatives in the future.
- In 2011, the Governor's Read to Lead Task Force reinforced the importance of early childhood in the development of literacy skills. Looking forward, the ECAC will connect to the Read to Lead Task Force recommendations that will be announced in 2012.

We would especially like to thank the ECAC members who have served Wisconsin in this endeavor since the inception of the Council in 2008. This broad-based leadership group has helped to shepherd an effective and achievable agenda and lays a strong foundation for developing the future potential of all young children in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Eloise Anderson, Secretary
Department of Children and Families
Co-Chair, Governor's Early Childhood
Advisory Council

Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent
Department of Public Instruction
Co-Chair, Governor's Early Childhood
Advisory Council



Eloise Anderson



Tony Evers



Executive Summary



The Wisconsin Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) was established in December 2008 and continues work dedicated to building a comprehensive, sustainable early childhood system. Wisconsin's vision is that "every child will be healthy, nurtured, safe, and successful." In the Council's first report issued in December 2010, the ECAC established long-term outcomes of quality early learning experiences; safe and healthy children; and stable, nurturing, and economically secure families to move Wisconsin toward this vision. The system level strategies identified include: establishing a system for assessing and screening children; aligning data across systems; generating additional public and private resources; nurturing children, families, and community partnerships; and providing cross-sector professional developmental opportunities.

The ECAC has established the following recommendations to guide its work in 2012:

- **Increase and Coordinate Screening and Assessment of Young Children:** More consistent and better information about young children at key developmental stages, such as birth to 3, preschool, and upon school entry, will be available for use in planning early childhood policies, programs, and services.
- **Establish and Support a Longitudinal Data System:** The capacity to track outcomes across systems will be improved and made more systematic to better determine young children's progress and to guide early childhood system planning.
- **Establish a Public-Private Funding Board:** More private resources will be generated and targeted toward desired outcomes and priorities for young children.
- **Expand Home Visiting, Especially Evidence-Based Programs:** Families will be better supported to provide stable and nurturing environments for their children.
- **Strengthen the Cross-Sector Professional Development System:** More children will have access to quality early learning from well-qualified professionals who have benefitted from a more coherent and comprehensive system of education and training.

"Early childhood services are critical to growing the skilled workforce our nation needs to thrive."

— Ron Painter, National Association of Workforce Boards, Washington, DC

“By 5, it is possible to predict, with depressing accuracy, who will complete high school and college and who won’t.”

*David Brooks
David Brooks: Schools and Skills
The New York Times; Editorial*



In 2011, the ECAC oversaw some important milestones and events that continue to shape the early care and education landscape in Wisconsin, following recommendations spelled out in the Council’s first annual report published in December 2010. Examples of specific initiatives guided by the ECAC in 2011 include the following:

- **Creating a Blueprint for Screening and Assessment.** The plan being developed by the Healthy Children Committee will serve as a guide for the state efforts to align the screening and assessment process for young children in the state.
- **Early Childhood - Longitudinal Data System (EC-LDS) Project Charter Signed.** Administrators from the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Health Services (DHS), and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) signed the EC-LDS Project Charter establishing goals, objectives, and deliverables for an aligned early childhood data system.
- **Recommendation for a Public-Private Funding Board.** An Ad Hoc Committee of business leaders and ECAC members designed a structure for a public-private partnership to support an early childhood system and quality improvement efforts.
- **Home Visiting Strategic Planning.** The Home Visiting Ad Hoc Committee continues to be involved in developing outcome priorities, evaluation, and program improvement strategies, and successful grant writing to secure additional funding.
- **Cross-Sector Professional Development Policy Scan Completed.** Strategic priorities for further aligning early childhood and family support career opportunities and career paths in Wisconsin were developed and formed the basis of proposed ECAC recommendations included in this report.
- **Submission of a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTTT-ELC) Application.** Wisconsin’s grant application articulated an ECAC-endorsed reform agenda. A cross-departmental team drafted the proposal that was ranked eleventh, narrowly missing a funding award.



Highlights of other Wisconsin efforts to strengthen the early childhood system that supported and reinforced the work of the ECAC in the last year include:

- **Increased Federal Funding for Home Visiting.** Over three million dollars in competitive federal funds were secured and will be deployed to further expand evidence-based home visiting programs in Wisconsin.
- **YoungStar Successfully Launched.** Wisconsin's quality rating and improvement system received 4,411 applications and has rated 3,156 programs.
- **Four-Year Old Kindergarten (4K) Continued to Reach More Children.** Four-year-old kindergarten (4K) continued to expand; 89% of school districts implemented programs for age-eligible children in the district, in many cases through community approaches.
- **Cross-Sector Training Opportunities Increased for Early and Family Support Providers.** Examples of training provided include: Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, Social and Emotional Foundation for Early Learning "Pyramid Model," and Strengthening Families. Wisconsin also increased funding for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarships for credit-based early childhood education.
- **Statewide Early Childhood Literacy Screener Recommended.** Governor's Read to Lead Task Force reinforced the importance of early literacy in preparing children for school.

"Compelling research by Nobel Prize-winning University of Chicago economist James Heckman and other economists and scientists tells us the best way to improve both America's K-12 educational systems and the nation's economy is to eliminate the achievement gap before it begins. Waiting until third grade to detect actual deficits in at-risk children is far too late. It's far less costly and more prudent to provide quality early learning programs."

*J.B. Pritzker
quoted in Forbes magazine,
September 22, 2011*



“Economists disagree about a lot of things, but many agree that public investments in early childhood education pay off. The social benefits far exceed the social costs.”

– Nancy Folbre
Economics Professor
University of Massachusetts,
The New York Times
Business Section

Background and Context

Early Childhood Advisory Council Charge and Vision



The ECAC was established in December 2008 by Executive Order #269. The Executive Order directs the Council to submit a statewide strategic plan for the early childhood system to the Governor. The 36-member ECAC is co-chaired by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Secretary Eloise Anderson and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Evers. The Council’s 2012 membership list can be found in Appendix A.

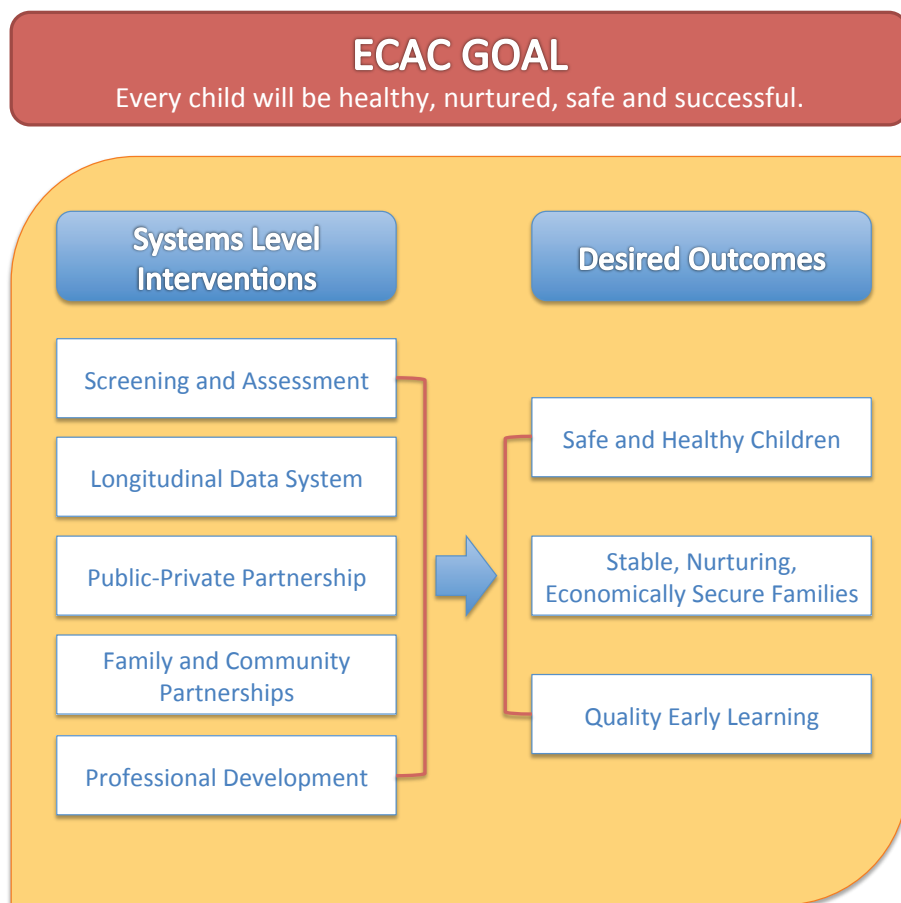
Charge to the ECAC

- Determine key early childhood system needs and identified outcomes using the findings of the 2010 system assessment and other current research that provides critical information about the quality and availability of early childhood programs.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and coordination.
- Develop recommendations for increasing participation in early childhood programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special needs populations.
- Develop recommendations regarding professional development and career advancement for early childhood educators and family support workers.

ECAC System Development Approach

This report documents work supporting the ECAC’s overarching vision, “to improve outcomes for children in school and in life.” This report’s recommendations for action in 2012 build on a long history of early childhood system investments and system building (further detailed in Appendix C), including advancements made in 2011. The ECAC continues to play a critical role in establishing cross-sector leadership and support for early childhood system development efforts that emphasize data-driven decision making, quality improvement, and cross-sector collaboration.

The following visual illustrates the overall outcomes and key strategies Wisconsin is using to work toward a comprehensive early childhood system. The over-riding goal is that **all children are healthy, nurtured, safe, and successful**. To achieve that goal, it is essential to focus on the ECAC outcomes of quality early learning experiences; safe and healthy children; and stable, nurturing, and economically secure families. The system level strategies include: establishing a system for assessing and screening children; aligning data by creating an EC-LDS; generating public and private resources to support early childhood system building efforts, supporting children, families and community partnerships; and ensuring access to cross-sector professional development opportunities.



“Successful state early learning and development systems are built on a broad-based stakeholder participation and effective governance structures. They are guided by clearly articulated goals and strategies designed to deliver a coordinated set of programs, policies, and services that are responsive to the needs of children and families and effectively prepare young children for school success.”

Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Application, page 7

Recommendations for 2012

Comprehensive Screening and Assessment System

Objective: Wisconsin will have better and more consistent information about young children at key developmental milestones by creating a comprehensive screening and assessment system that is used for planning early childhood policies, programs, and services.

“The business community supports high-quality early childhood education programs because they lead to improved education results, a world-class work force, a healthier society, and ultimately a stronger economy.”

*— Joseph M. Tucci,
The Business Roundtable*

2011 Progress

- A Screening and Assessment Workgroup secured consultation through ECAC from Katherine Magnuson, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, in crafting workgroup recommendations; and drafted a guidance document including definitions, schedules, principles, tools, and community models.
- Explored alignment of community screening and assessment processes.
- Proposed implementation of a comprehensive kindergarten entry assessment in Wisconsin’s RTTT-ELC application to better understand the status of children’s learning and development.
- See <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac/initiatives.htm> for the Screening and Assessment Committee’s report.

2012 Recommendations

- Adopt a timeline with recommended ages for screening and assessment of a young child’s development and related health matters.
- Work with state departments and other public and private partners to develop cross-sector approaches to promote the implementation of this screening and assessment schedule for all children.
- Continue to align screening and assessment efforts with statewide longitudinal data system building efforts.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive statewide kindergarten entry assessment process.
- Explore efforts to address access to oral health in the screening and assessment process.

Longitudinal Data System

Objective: Wisconsin will be better able to measure child outcomes across systems to better evaluate young children's progress. Longitudinal data will guide early childhood system planning and decision making.

2011 Progress

- Hired key staff using support from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds and DPI Longitudinal Data System grant funds.
- Worked with the Early Childhood State Support Team of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to develop a state planning tool for EC-LDS that will be highlighted at the NCES Winter Forum in 2012.
- Initiated an EC-LDS workgroup that developed a detailed work plan and communication strategy that included: high level department briefings, presentations at national conferences, identification of key policy questions the EC-LDS should address, identification of possible indicators to track, and an inventory of potential programs that EC-LDS should include.
- Secured a signed cross-departmental Project Charter spelling out the work plan and expectations for the EC-LDS.
- Requested funding for system implementation in Wisconsin's RTTT-ELC application.
- See <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac/initiatives.htm> for cross-departmental charter.

2012 Recommendations

- Host a data roundtable to engage key program stakeholders in identifying key underlying questions and issues to help shape the EC-LDS.
- Identify data that answers roundtable questions and that indicates school readiness; determine linkages needed between agencies to collect such data; and identify data gaps.
- Develop methodology to share data across sectors
- Formalize data governance, usage, and privacy policies.
- Develop an annual and ongoing public reporting function that is based on identified indicators of success.
- Identify and secure resources to implement the EC-LDS.

"States have worked so diligently to build their capacity to collect and use quality education data, but we will see improved student achievement only when all stakeholders—from parents to policymakers—actually use these data to make informed decisions... The need is urgent: state policymakers are right now in the process of allocating scarce resources based on what works to help students, and they cannot do that well without data."

*—Aimee Guidera, Executive Director
of the Data Quality Campaign*



Public-Private Funding Structure

Objective: Wisconsin will generate more private resources that can be targeted toward desired outcomes and priorities for young children by aligning and leveraging regional and local resources, and engaging the business, private, and philanthropic sectors as partners to improve early childhood outcomes.

2011 Progress

- Formed committee of business representatives and ECAC members to develop specifics of this recommendation.
- Made recommendations about a Public Private Funding Board structure, including the following.
 - The Board should be tied to the ECAC.
 - The Board should launch by connecting with an existing 501(c)3 and later transition to a more permanent structure.
 - The Board should have public and private members.
 - Funding would include public and private sector support and be driven by measurable outcomes and benchmarks.
 - The Board would adopt a plan that defines “local community structures” as the grant recipients.
 - The Board would seek a public grant for administrative support and to attract private sector matching funds.
- Requested support for the “public” funding of the board in RTTT-ELC application.
- See <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac/initiatives.htm> for report.

2012 Recommendations

Wisconsin should establish a Public-Private Funding Board that will leverage resources and engage communities to improve early childhood development.

“Early Childhood Development is recognized within the business community for the significant contributions it makes to educational attainment leading to a more productive workforce and to the resulting long-term economic impact of these early investments.”

– National Association of Manufacturers



Supporting Families and Community Partnerships

Objective: Wisconsin families will be better supported to provide healthy, stable, and nurturing environments for their children.

2011 Progress

- Secured additional resources from the federal Maternal Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program to support home visiting programs in Rock, Brown, Burnett, and Kenosha Counties, and two additional programs serving Milwaukee County. Four Tribes received support through a grant to the Great Lakes Inter-tribal Council (GLITC): the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Forest County Potawatomi Community, Sokaogon Chippewa Community, and the St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin.
- Established regional home visiting Communities of Practice and a Home Visiting Mentor Protégé Program to support implementation of evidence-based home visiting programs.
- Made recommendations for additions and enhancements to the state data system for home visiting programs.
- Emphasized support for Community Response programs established and funded by the Children's Trust Fund as the priority initiative within all Family Resource Centers to better serve at-risk families across the state.
- Identified goals around better connections between child welfare and quality early experiences such as Head Start.
- Proposed the alignment of cross-sector, culturally appropriate, evidence-based family engagement strategies in the RTTT-ELC application.

2012 Recommendations

- Implement a comprehensive training and technical assistance plan to assist all existing and new home visiting programs in moving to evidence-based models.
- Focus all prevention programs on three key outcomes: reducing child abuse/neglect, improving child and family health, and improving school readiness.
- Improve connections between children in the child welfare system and high quality early education experiences.

“In early childhood you may lay the foundation of poverty or riches, industry or idleness, good or evil, by the habits to which you train your children. Teach them the right habits and their future life is safe.”

— Lydia Sigourney, Poet

“If kids come to educators and teachers from strong, healthy, functioning families, it makes our job easier. If they do not come to us from strong, healthy, functioning families, it makes our job more important.”

– Barbara Colrose, Teacher

Cross-Sector Professional Development

Objective: Wisconsin’s young children will have access to quality early learning by ensuring that their early care and family support providers have increased access to cross-sector, culturally and linguistically appropriate professional development opportunities.

2011 Progress

- Re-created the Professional Development Initiative (PDI) to focus on continued cross-sector professional development work.
- Completed a Professional Development Policy Scan.
See <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac/initiatives.htm> for report.
- Initiated the creation of the Office of Early Learning at the DPI to serve as a center for cross-sector early childhood professional development.
- Expanded training and technical assistance on Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and the Pyramid Model for Social and Emotional Development.
- Developed a plan to support evidence-based home visiting that includes professional development.
- Developed and implemented an early childhood obesity prevention curriculum for YoungStar related training.
- Introduced and implemented an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Competency and Endorsement System.
- Proposed expanded support for activities related to professional development in the RTTT-ELC application.

2012 Recommendations

- Continue to develop a comprehensive cross-sector professional development system related to early learning that includes teachers, caregivers, family service and support professionals, administrators, and others.
- Align early learning standards with K-12 Common Core State Standards through connections among DPI, DCF, DHS, and The Registry.
- Facilitate implementation of best practices, including communities of practice, coaching, mentoring, and ongoing technical assistance to improve early childhood quality.
- Strengthen the alignment and articulation of early childhood teaching credentials across levels and systems.

Conclusion



he ECAC has made progress toward the overall vision guiding the Council's work in 2011. We have established ambitious yet achievable goals for the state in 2012 and spelled out key strategies that we believe will advance us closer toward our overall goal that children in Wisconsin grow up healthy, nurtured, safe, and ready to succeed.

"Here in Wisconsin, we need to invest in early learning. Too many kids come to school unprepared to learn, which leads to higher dropout rates, a lagging workforce, and a damaged economy. We can invest now, or pay later."





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Appendix A

Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council Membership

Secretary Eloise Anderson
Council Co-Chair
Department of Children and Families

State Superintendent Tony Evers
Council Co-Chair
Department of Public Instruction

Therese Ahlers
Director
Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health

Nancy K. Armbrust
Vice President, Education and Community Relations
Human Resource Systems and Strategy (Retired)
Schreiber Foods, Inc.

John Ashley
Executive Director
Wisconsin Association of School Boards

Joan Beck
Board President
Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association

Fredi-Ellen Bove
Administrator
Division of Safety and Permanence
Department of Children and Families

Sheila Briggs
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Academic Excellence
Department of Public Instruction

Michael Burke
Program Director
Buffett Early Childhood Fund

Daniel Burkhalter
Executive Director
Wisconsin Education Association Council

Dan Clancy
President
Wisconsin Technical College System

Shelley Cousin
Executive Director
Wisconsin Head Start Association

Linda Davis
School Readiness Philanthropy Group

Dave Edie
Education Policy Analyst
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

Delores Gokee-Rindal
Administrator
Red Cliff Early Childhood Center

Gary Hamblin
Secretary
Department of Corrections

Lilly B. Irvin-Vitela
Executive Director
Supporting Families Together Association

Bob Jones
Executive Director
Wisconsin Community Action Program Association

Peter Kelly
President and CEO
United Way Fox Cities

Becky Kikkert
Policy Advisor to Governor Walker

Viluck Kue
Executive Director
Wisconsin United Coalition of Mutual Assistance
Association, Inc.

Kia LaBracke
Executive Director
Wisconsin American Academy of Pediatrics

Linda Leonhart
Director
Wisconsin Head Start
State Collaboration Office
Department of Public Instruction

Genniene Lovelace-Michel
Family Child Care Provider
Wisconsin Child Care Providers Together

Jay Maes
Parent Affiliate
Wisconsin Head Start Association

Lupe Martinez

President and CEO
United Migrant Opportunity Services
Corporate Headquarters

Kevin Reilly

President
University of Wisconsin System

Elaine Richmond

Division Administrator
Division of Early Care and Education
Department of Children and Families

Ruth Schmidt

Executive Director
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

Dennis Smith

Secretary
Department of Health Services

Mary Anne Snyder

Executive Director
Children's Trust Fund

Carolyn Stanford Taylor

Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy
Department of Public Instruction

Jon Stellmacher

Co-Chair, Partnership for Wisconsin's Economic
Success (PWES)
Senior Vice President
Chief of Staff and Administration (Retired)
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Ann Terrell

Director
Division for Early Childhood Education
Milwaukee Public Schools

Phong Vang

Executive Director
Hmong American Association of Portage County

Joseph Wall

Federal Prosecutor
United States Department of Justice

Rolf Wegenke

President
Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges
and Universities

ECAC Staff**Alyssa Bokelman**

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Department of Children and Families

Jill Haglund

Early Childhood Consultant
Department of Public Instruction

Linda McCart

Policy Director
Office of Policy Initiatives and Budget
Department of Health Services

Jane Penner-Hoppe

Policy Advisor
Department of Children and Families

Appendix B

Helpful Websites

Specific Report References

Wisconsin's Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council Building Blocks for Wisconsin's Future: The Foundation for an Early Childhood System

December 2010, Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council's yearly report to the Governor.

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac/pdf/report.pdf>

Wisconsin Early Childhood System Assessment Report, submitted to the ECAC

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac/pdf/assessment_report.pdf

Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System Project Charter

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac/pdf/10411_eclids_charter.pdf

Public-Private Partnership Report

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac/pdf/10411_public_private.pdf

Cross-Sector Professional Development Policy Scan Report

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac/pdf/10411_pdi_policy_scan.pdf

Wisconsin's Race to the Top Application

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/applications/wisconsin.pdf>

Early Childhood System Level

Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

Center's mission is to "advance that vision by using science to enhance child well-being through innovations in policy and practice."

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

Child Trends

Child Trends is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research center that studies children at all stages of development. It seeks to improve the lives of children and youth by conducting high-quality research and sharing it with the people and institutions whose decisions and actions affect children.

<http://www.childtrends.org/>

National Conference of State Legislatures

The NCSL website provides information regarding the return on investment from high-quality early education, including the work of Art Rolnick and Rob Grunewald, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

<http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=16436>

National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)

The NIEER website is a compendium of research on early care and education.
www.nieer.org

Ready Nation, formerly The Partnership for America's Economic Success (PAES)

PAES has changed its name to Ready Nation and continues to bring together business leaders, economists, and philanthropists to increase understanding of how we can secure our economic future by helping all children to become successful adults through early childhood investment.

<http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org/index.php?id=01>

Pew Center for the States

Pew highlights research on the financial benefits of early childhood programs, such as the NorthStar Economics Report on 4K in Wisconsin. This report highlights findings of a 2005 study that showed 4K programs generated strong fiscal benefits for the state, such as reduction in crime and reliance on welfare, as well as benefits to children and their families.

http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/initiatives_detail.aspx?initiativeID=31672

Public Policy Forum A Map of Early Childhood Research

The Public Policy Forum in Milwaukee has created a searchable matrix of early childhood research on early childhood outcomes.

<http://www.publicpolicyforum.org/Matrix.htm>

Science of Early Childhood Development

A ground-breaking study on early childhood development, From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development, by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2000.

http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=9824&page=1

Wisconsin Census Data

Census data on Wisconsin children and families at state and county levels.
http://www.wccf.org/kidcount_data.php

Wisconsin's Early Care and Education Landscape: Planning for a Coherent System, 2009, provides an overview of early care and education in Wisconsin and options for a system plan.
http://www.wccf.org/pdf/ece_planning_system_11-2009.pdf

Safe and Healthy Children**Information: Certificate for Infant Mental Health**

An overview of the new Infant, Early Childhood, and Family Mental Health Certificate
<http://www.dcs.wisc.edu/pda/mental-health/infant.htm>

Wisconsin's State Health Plan

Wisconsin's state health plan, *Healthiest Wisconsin 2020: Everyone Living Better, Longer*
<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/hw2020/report2020.htm>

Stable, Nurturing, and Economically Secure Families**Wisconsin State Home Visiting Plan**

http://dcf.wi.gov/children/home_visiting_needs_assessment/pdf/home_visiting_plan.pdf

Wisconsin Children's Trust Fund

What It Will Take: Investing in Wisconsin's Future by Keeping Kids Safe Today
<http://wichildrenstrustfund.org/index.php?section=stats-and-reports>

Home Visitation: Assessing Progress, Managing Expectations

A report from the Ounce of Prevention Fund in Chicago, provides an overview of home visiting services.
<http://www.ounceofprevention.org/research/pdfs/HomeVisitation.pdf>

Embedding Home Visiting within a System of Early Childhood Services

This briefing describes a University of Chicago, Chapin Hall study by Deborah Daro. It delineates strategies for incorporating home visiting into early childhood services and systems.
http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac/pdf/home_visitation.pdf

2009 Governor's Building Bridges to Family Economic Success**Summit Report**

This report provides an overview of recommendations regarding poverty reduction and family economic security.
<http://www.wiscap.org/pdfs/DCF%20Building%20Bridges%20final.pdf>

Quality Early Learning

Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers

2001 National Research Council study of early learning.

<http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=0309068363>

Information on YoungStar, Wisconsin's Quality Rating and Improvement System

This website provides detailed information about YoungStar, Wisconsin's Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care.

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/>

Information on Department of Public Instruction Early Childhood Programs

<http://dpi.wi.gov/ec>

Information on the history of Wisconsin's collaborative efforts and collaborative issues and events

Highlighted on the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners website.

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/>

Information on 4K in Wisconsin

<http://dpi.wi.gov/ec/ec4yrpag.html>

Information on children with disabilities - Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners website

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/disabilities-about.php>

Information on Wisconsin Early Childhood Special Education Services at DPI

<http://dpi.wi.gov/ec/ecspedhm.html>

Information on Head Start and Early Head Start in Wisconsin

<http://whsaonline.org>

Learning to Read: Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters

Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010, includes recommendations on the need for a coherent system of early care and education.

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/reports/readingmatters.aspx>

National Resources on serving children with disabilities

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/disabilities-about.php>

Appendix C

Wisconsin's Early Childhood System History of Investments and System Strengths

Increased Investments

Increased investments in early care and education programs have resulted in more children and their families having access to high quality early care and education opportunities. Wisconsin's Race to the Top Application (link provided in Appendix B) highlighted a history of funding for early childhood and family support.

- **Investments in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K).** There was a 48% increase in students in 4K between 2007 and 2010. Today, 89% of public elementary school districts are offering 4K to 46,022 4-year-olds. Wisconsin is ranked 6th in the nation in access to 4-year-old state-funded preschool.
- **Collaborative 4K.** There has been a corresponding growth in the number of school districts that provide 4K in community settings such as child care and Head Start.
- **Head Start and Early Head Start.** In 2010, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding was secured to support six new Early Head Start (EHS) programs, including two American Indian programs. ARRA support also allowed five existing EHS programs to expand their services.
- **State Funding for Head Start.** The state has provided a supplement for Head Start for the last 15 years, making Wisconsin one of only 13 states to provide state resources for Head Start. This allows Wisconsin to consistently serve more eligible children.
- **Quality Rating and Improvement System Launched.** In 2010, Wisconsin more than doubled investments in quality with the launching of YoungStar, Wisconsin's quality rating and improvement system. The system is focused on improving the quality of child care for Wisconsin's most vulnerable children. By the end of 2011, 4,411 programs applied to participate, and 3,156 were rated. Technical assistance and formal rating observers are continuing to rate and monitor programs, and to help participating programs improve the quality of their services.

- **Generous Child Care Subsidy Program.** Since 1997, Wisconsin has maintained Wisconsin Shares as a critical support for working low-income families. Despite state fiscal challenges, this program remains a priority with no waiting list, serving over 53,000 children per month.
- **Increase in State Home Visiting Services.** Between 2007 and 2010, Wisconsin increased the number of families receiving state-funded home visiting services by over 50%. It is anticipated that 1,100 more children will be served when recently funded programs become fully operational due to the expanded funding for home visiting.

Wisconsin's Strong Early Childhood System Foundation - Building Blocks

Wisconsin's early childhood system has critical building blocks that provide a strong foundation for ECAC goals in 2012.

System Development History

- **Commitment to State Level Cross-Sector Collaboration.** The Wisconsin's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant in 2004 was folded into the existing Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP), originally launched in 1995. Together, these efforts have provided critical cross-sector support, coordination, and resources for the ECAC.
- **Commitment to Regional and Local Collaboration.** Past efforts have created regional structures and community models for cross-sector collaboration, including community approaches to four-year-old kindergarten, serving children with disabilities in community settings, infant mental health summits, connecting services for children who are homeless, and many others.
- **Business Engagement in Early Childhood.** In 2008, Wisconsin formed the Partnership for Wisconsin's Economic Success (PWES), the first state chapter of the national Partnership for America's Economic Success. Its mission is to elevate young children as one of the state's top priorities. PWES members serve on the ECAC. A Committee for Economic Development (CED)-sponsored meeting was held in Madison on May 18, 2011. The purpose of the event was to highlight research about the benefits of early childhood investments, and showcase successful models where states have invested significantly in early childhood and achieved better outcomes for children. This event involved 50 business leaders, legislators, and early childhood stakeholders.
- **Wisconsin's Children's Trust Fund** has been recognized for innovation and promising practices to prevent child abuse and neglect and for their work to develop and support a statewide network of Family Resource Centers.

Early Childhood Program Leadership

- **Strong Child Care Regulation System.** Wisconsin's child care licensing system was rated the sixth most comprehensive system by the National Association of Regulatory Agencies (NARA) in 2009.
- **YoungStar Quality Rating and Improvement System.** YoungStar was launched in 2010 and was recognized as a top ten policy innovation by Zero to Three, a national advocacy organization. The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Collaborative cited Wisconsin's health and wellness standards as a national model.
- **Four Year Old Kindergarten.** In addition to increased funding and more children served in 4K, Wisconsin 4K programs meet national benchmarks established by NIEER for quality standards including implementation of early learning standards, degree requirements for teachers, specialized early childhood training for teachers, teacher in-service provision, and on-site monitoring.
- **Head Start and Early Head Start.** A comprehensive Head Start and Early Head Start system operates in Wisconsin in 70 of Wisconsin's 72 counties. Head Start enrollment increased by 13% between 2007 and 2011. Over that same time period, Early Head Start enrollment doubled, and the number of children served by Tribal Head Start and Early Head Start has increased by 27%.
- **Services for Children with Disabilities.** The Wisconsin Birth to 3 program (IDEA Part C) and the Early Childhood Special Education Program (IDEA Part B) serving three to five year olds provide broad eligibility for services. Wisconsin's services for children with disabilities, birth to age five have been recognized as a best practice for collaboration as a result of coordination between IDEA Part C and Part B that effectively transitions children between programs.

Cross-Sector Professional Development Leadership

- **Strong Cross-Sector Professional Development Structure.** Wisconsin's professional development efforts were nationally recognized at a 2007 National Symposium of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
- **Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS).** Created in 2003, WMELS specify developmental expectations for children from birth to first grade, address all domains of development, and have served as a model for other states. Training has been widely offered across the state and is incorporated in YoungStar criteria.
- **Strengthening Families.** Wisconsin was one of the first states to pilot the Strengthening Families training in protective factors. This training continues to be offered and is incorporated in YoungStar criteria.
- **Social and Emotional Health.** Wisconsin was one of ten states to receive technical assistance to implement training using the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning "Pyramid Model" to promote understanding of infant and early childhood mental health issues.
- **Infant Mental Health Endorsement Adopted in Wisconsin.** This endorsement verifies and recognizes the knowledge, training, and competencies among early childhood and infant mental health professionals.
- **The Governor's Read to Lead Task Force.** This task force sharpened the focus on the importance of children's early literacy skills as a critical foundation for school success. The full report can be found at: <http://165.189.60.210/documents/read.pdf>

This report was developed jointly by the Early Childhood Advisory Council, the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Public Instruction with assistance from Wisconsin Council on Children and Dave Edie.

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